

any work on electro-therapeutics, and which belongs to a method now out of date. The reader expects not generalities, but a weighing of the good and bad points of the work which a journal undertakes to criticize.

Not only is the criticism vague, but it is limited to the subject of electro-therapeutics, which forms but a minor part of the work. Had the critic, instead of limiting his attention to the "illustrations, printing and paper," read the work, or at least looked over the table of contents, he would have convinced himself that electro-therapeutics forms but a small part of the work; a large proportion refers to the subject of electro-physics, which has been reduced to as scientific a basis as any other department of physics. The subject of electric illumination and transillumination is no longer one of controversy, but is now almost universally advocated. Electrolysis, cataphoresis and massage, by means of electric appliances, belong more to electro-surgery than to electro-therapeutics, and the subject of the X-rays has passed beyond its experimental stage, and is now admitted as a useful procedure in hospitals and medical colleges.

The book has only recently been published, and I have thus far seen but three criticisms in addition to a number of simple notices. Of the three criticisms referred to, one is in your journal, August 20; the second is in the *Journal of Eye, Ear and Throat Diseases*, Baltimore, July, 1898, and the third in the *Memphis Medical Monthly*, September, 1898. I herewith enclose a copy of the second and third criticisms, which bear on their face the evidence of a careful reading of the matter and a weighing of its merits. They form a strong contrast with the vapid generalities in the official organ of the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. Yours very truly,  
(Dictated.) W. SCHEPPEGRELL, M.D.

[Enclosures: Extract from *Journal of Eye, Ear and Throat Diseases*, July, 1898. Extract from *Memphis Medical Monthly*, September, 1898.]

ANSWER.—This journal has not space to do more than give brief "notices." It rarely prints "reviews." The aim is to inform the reader what the contents are. In this case the title was sufficiently explicit. The manner in which the publisher performs his part of the book-making is not a matter of indifference, but a proper subject of praise or censure. Nothing was said to the detriment of Dr. Scheppegrell's excellent work in our notice, which is now given the additional notice its author desires.

#### Hospital at Fort Myer.

U. S. GENERAL HOSPITAL, FORT MYER, VA.  
Aug. 30, 1898.

To the Editor:—We have here a magnificent hospital under the command of Major and Surgeon W. B. Davis, U. S. A., whose earnest work is making this one of the finest hospitals in the country.

We have about four hundred patients, and one ward containing 200 beds as yet not entirely filled. This ward I believe to be the largest in the world.

Most of our patients are typhoid, and every material is at the hands of the surgeon in charge with which to do his work.

The charges and criticism relative to improper food and attendance is, in the case of this hospital, a falsehood, and I believe it to be so in the others, for as rapidly as possible every thing is being accomplished for our sick soldiers.

Respectfully, D. H. LAMB,  
Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. A., formerly of Owosso, Mich.

#### Is there Danger in Employment of Female Assistants by Dental Surgeons?

LA PORTE, IND., Sept. 12, 1898.

To the Editor:—Should dental surgeons employ female

assistants? It would seem not if the following cases can be proven to be more than a coincidence. Some years ago a dentist in our city had a young woman in his employ to assist in his surgical operations. After remaining in the office several years she was married, and in due time an infant appeared upon the scene with a hare lip and cleft palate. The young woman who next assumed her duties in the office remained eight years, when she became a wife, and recently gave birth to a daughter with the same horrid deformity. I would like to hear from the profession if similar cases are on record.

E. L. ANNIS, M.D.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH.

Governor Tanner has appointed Dr. A. C. Corr, of Carlinville, to the vacancy in the Illinois Board of Health. He was last year President of the Illinois State Medical Society, and it is understood that he will be the next President of the Board.

How to Use Millions Usefully Against Tuberculosis.—The editor of the *London Practitioner* reminds his readers that some years ago a millionaire, burdened beyond most of his kind with a sense of the duties of his position and fortune, asked through a newspaper for suggestions as to the employment of his wealth in the way likely to be most beneficial to the public. For some reason or other nothing came of it. If such a question were asked again, I should unhesitatingly answer that there could be no better object than the foundation of properly equipped sanatoria in this country for poor sufferers from phthisis. That the public, if appealed to in the right way, would help liberally is not to be doubted. The manner in which they support consumption hospitals shows that their help might be counted upon in an active crusade against the disease. But the question is not one of merely philanthropic interest; it is of national importance, as it closely concerns the maintenance of the vigor of the race. On this ground the co-operation of the State might well be asked. In this country it is notoriously difficult to get even enlightened statesmen to attend to anything out of which party capital can not be made. But even here the day is surely, if somewhat slowly, coming when ordinary legislators will be brought to recognize that the public health is the first and greatest of political questions. Let us, in short, have a national crusade against a national disease.

The Plague in India.—It is discouraging to learn, as we do by telegraph, that after all that has been done for Bombay in the way both of curative and of preventive measures, the plague has broken out afresh in that unhappy city. As yet, it is true, there is nothing alarming in the reports that have reached this country; for these speak of an increase of mortality from this source of only about 20 per cent., as compared with the figures for the corresponding weeks of last year. But the distressing thing is that there should have been an increase at all, when we might so reasonably have looked for a decrease, if not even for an entire stamping out of the germs of this disease. For the most recent advances in the science of bacteriology have been brought to bear by some of the most skilled European experts, on the vital problem presented by the condition of Bombay. All the tried and prophylactic measures have been put into force there and the whole power of the government has been placed at the disposal of the health officers, who have been doing such valiant battle with their insidious foe; but the results show that when it has once found a congenial environment the expelling of it is very far from being an easy task. Some parts of the city, it is said, have been so completely changed by the clearing away of plague-infected dwellings that it would be difficult for an old resident, in paying the place a visit after an absence of a year or two, to recognize localities with which he was, until recently, most familiarly acquainted. It